

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNING VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 1997

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, on any given night, you can turn on your television during primetime and watch someone commit assault, murder, or any other act of violence. While you and I know that the violent world depicted nightly on our television screen does not reflect life accurately, all too often our children take what they see as truth.

Children are particularly sensitive to the world around them, as they notice and absorb everything they see and experience. Study after study for decade after decade has confirmed the commonsense intuition that when children view violence their behavior becomes increasingly violent. The American Psychological Association estimates that a typical child will watch 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school.

However, the harm caused by viewing violence is broader than the encouraging of violent behavior. Studies have found that viewing violence increases mistrust of others and fear of being a victim of violence, and desensitizes viewers to violence resulting in calloused attitudes and apathetic behavior toward violence.

Over the years, Congress and broadcasters have sporadically tackled this issue. For example, in 1990, Congress passed the Children's Television Act to increase the amount of quality educational programming for children. The recent rewrite of the telecommunications bill included a requirement that television sets be manufactured with a computer chip that would allow parents to screen out programs, rated by the broadcast industry, that are inappropriate for their children. And more recently, the broadcasters have agreed to work out an industrywide compromise on generating a content based rating system. I support these efforts.

Yet I believe more needs to be done. It is useful to put up signs warning others if a river is polluted, but it is even more useful to clean up the river. That is why I am introducing a resolution, with 11 other Members of Congress, expressing the sense of the House that broadcasters should not air excessively violent programming between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Cleaning up television will not resolve all of the Nation's ills. But as former Education Secretary William J. Bennett points out, in recent years we have seen an explosion in moral pathologies: Abused and abandoned children, out-of-wedlock births, drug use, violent crime, and just plain trashy behavior, as well as the vanishing of the unwritten rules of decency and civility, social strictures, and basic good manners. He attributes this to the fact that the

good requires constant reinforcement, and the bad needs only permission.

Turning the tide, reinforcing the good will ultimately take a massive collective effort, one that engages our families, our civic leaders, our religious leaders, our teachers, our community leaders, all levels of government, neighbors—everyone in society. But the media, too, with its enormous role in the socialization process, must join us in this effort.

CLARIFICATION BY FATHER DRINAN

HON. HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 12, 1997

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that Jesuit Father and Georgetown University Law Center Prof. Robert F. Drinan has withdrawn statements he made in a New York Times article of June 4, 1996, on legislation to ban so-called partial-birth abortion. At the request of the Most Reverend John R. McNamara, regional bishop for Massachusetts' Merrimack region, I am submitting for the RECORD the text of Father Drinan's statement of May 12, 1997, clarifying his position on abortion.

Articles that I wrote in the New York Times on June 4, 1996, and in the National Catholic Reporter on May 31, 1996, were used in ways I did not intend. I withdraw those statements and any statement that could be understood to cast doubt on the Church's firm condemnation of abortion—a doctrine that I totally support.

Moreover, new information about the true nature and widespread use of partial-birth abortion renders my statements on that issue in 1996 factually incorrect.

I do not believe that every moral evil should be outlawed. I do, however, see abortion—particularly partial-birth abortions—a grave evil and can understand why Church leaders are urging lawmakers to ban it. I do not want anything to impede that effort. On the contrary, I join in that effort and stand ready to promote laws and public policies that aim to protect vulnerable human life from conception until natural death. I support the Catholic bishops in their efforts to exercise moral leadership in the fight against abortion.

CORRECTING PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GUAM AND THE CNMI

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 1997

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, recently many Members have expressed interest in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands [CNMI]. Some have described it as a model of economic policy, others as a blemish on the fabric of American values. On March

19, 1997, Mr. DELAY submitted an extension of remarks in which he discussed the economic situation in the CNMI. In the context of these remarks, Mr. DELAY made several comparisons between the CNMI and Guam.

Unfortunately, political, governmental, historical, economic, and demographic differences make such comparisons misleading. For example, in 1995, the total work force in the CNMI was 37,393; 32,522—87 percent—of which were foreign born. Considering the number of foreign guest workers the NMI is importing, their level of unemployment should be very low. However, the unemployment rate among U.S. citizens in the CNMI is over 14 percent while on Guam it is about 8 percent. If the NMI's unemployment rate was any higher it would raise serious questions about the use of their foreign guest worker program.

Because Guam does not have a similar guest worker program and complies with Federal minimum wage and labor standards, one cannot take this or other isolated economic statistics and make direct comparisons between the CNMI and Guam. Guam currently pays the prevailing wage which can be four times the minimum wage. However, Mr. DELAY is correct that Guam's economy is hindered by certain economic policies, but these obstacles originate from the Federal Government, not from Guam itself.

In an effort to correct this situation, the people of Guam, through the Draft Guam Commonwealth Act, are seeking a new relationship with the United States and a comprehensive review of the application of Federal laws on Guam. Through this legislation Guam is working toward removing those Federal obstacles to stimulate economic growth and establishing a new political relationship with the Federal Government.

It is important to note that Guam does not want to use the CNMI as a model of labor, immigration, or economic policy. We do not desire to use greater autonomy and control over immigration to establish a massive guest worker program to fuel a low wage garment industry. Rather we seek to stem the flow of immigration to our island which is suffering as a result of the application of Federal immigration. Guam needs some guest workers, but this program must be consistent with our basic principles of justice and fairness.

Contrary to many reports circulating around Congress, the CNMI is neither a den of labor iniquity or a model of economic freedom. I hope that as the debate surrounding the CNMI continues that members remember the historical context in which the NMI joined the American family and don't turn this into a battle ground for a debate on the national minimum wage issue.

I appreciate Mr. DELAY's support for increased local control for the territories. I invite all Members who support local control to support Guam's desire for a commonwealth status which is consistent with this position. I look forward to working with Mr. DELAY and other Members of Congress on this critical issue.

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